FCC 02-277

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United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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March 19, 2003

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The Honorable Michael Powell, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12ᵗʰ St., SW
Washington, DC 20554

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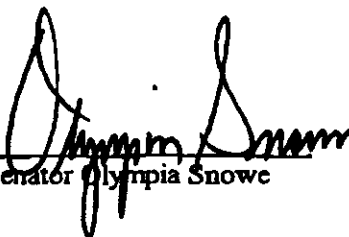Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

Dear Chairman Powell:

As the Commission engages in a major revision of our nation's media ownership rules in its omnibus rulemaking, we are writing to urge the FCC to ensure that Congress and the public have a full opportunity to review and comment on any specific changes the Commission intends to make in this proceeding before such rules are issued in final form. We applaud the agency for undertaking a thorough analysis of its current rules but believe that it would be inappropriate to make significant changes that could have a sweeping impact on how our society engages in public debate without first having a complete public airing of these changes.

The mass media provide the news and information that the citizens of this country use to participate in our democratic society. A fully functioning democracy depends on media sources with diverse voices and opinions as well as content relevant to local communities. Over the years, courts have reaffirmed the belief of Congress that independent ownership of media outlets results in more diverse media voices, greater competition among owners, and the production of more local content.

It is therefore essential that the Commission justify how any changes in media rules will promote diversity, competition, and localism by soliciting public comment focused specifically on the agency's proposed changes. Please do not proceed with a final rule until the Commission provides both a full description of all proposed changes and the empirical foundation for the changes, as well as provide for an ample public comment period, so that members of the public and Congress will have an opportunity to evaluate the new rules' potential impact.

Sincerely,

Senator Wayne Allard   Senator Olympia Snowe   Senator Susan Collins

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